

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 26, 2008 has been received and reviewed. This response, submitted along with a Petition for a Two-Month Extension of Time and a Request for Continued Examination (RCE), is directed to that action.

Claims 1, 5 and 21 have been amended, and claim 17 has been cancelled. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found in claim 17 as originally filed, and, more specifically in the specification on page 8, lines 3-8. The amendments to claims 5 and 21 correct minor informalities. No new matter has been added.

The applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 5 and 21 for minor informalities. These claims have been amended herein, thus rendering the objections moot.

Claim Rejections- 35 U.S.C. §102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5-7, 14-15 and 17-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Duffield (GB 2374830). The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The presently claimed invention has been amended herein so that the composition has a pH when measured as a 5% wt. solution in deionised water at 20°C of between 4.0 and 6.0. In comparison, Duffield only requires that the water softening composition has a pH in the range of 7 to 9. (See Duffield, page 21, line 5). Accordingly, Duffield does not

teach all of the limitations of the presently claimed invention and, as such, does not anticipate the present claims.

Moreover, the applicants submit that it would not be obvious for the skilled artisan to modify Duffield to yield a composition according to the presently claimed invention because Duffield provides no teaching whatsoever that would lead a skilled artisan to lower the pH of the composition. Duffield's disclosed pH range is between 7 to 9, thus neutral to basic. The pH range of the presently claimed invention is decidedly acidic. A skilled artisan would not think to completely alter the pH of a water softening composition from neutral or basic to acidic for fear that the softening effects would not be retained. Indeed, persons of ordinary skill in the art are all too aware of the inherent uncertainties in the chemical arts to make predictions with absolute or near-absolute certainty, and changing the pH would be outside the scope of what could be deemed ordinary and obvious to a skilled artisan.

Accordingly, the applicant's submit that a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be led to the presently claimed invention after reading Duffield, especially when the focus of Duffield is on the production of multi-compartment pouches rather than containers comprising water softening compositions, as in the present invention.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1-2, 4, 8-13 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Lee et al. (US 2001/006936). The applicants respectfully submit that this rejection has been rendered moot by the amendment to claim 1 herein.

The applicants believe the claims are now in condition for allowance, and such favorable action is respectfully requested. If any issues remain, the resolution of which

can be advanced through a telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at the phone number listed below.

CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If entry and consideration of the amendments above requires an extension of time, Applicant respectfully requests that this be considered a petition therefor. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee(s) due in this connection to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess, to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

Respectfully submitted,

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